

DRAFT Design Charrette Summary

The Visioning Workshop for the Milpitas Transit Area Concept Plan took place at Milpitas City Hall, on February 17, 2005 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Property owners and stakeholders were present, as well as City Staff (see attached list of attendees). The following is a summary of what took place.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tambri Heyden, Acting Planning & Neighborhood Services Director, welcomed stakeholders to the charrette and introduced Leslie Gould of Dyett & Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners.

AGENDA AND UPDATES

Leslie Gould reviewed the agenda for the charrette and described work that has occurred since the January 20 Workshop. One update is VTA's proposal to have BART run on an aerial track over Montague Expressway, in order to save costs.

OVERALL VISION AND PRELIMINARY CONCEPT PLAN

Ms. Gould described the overall vision and goals for the project area and discussed market realities, existing zoning, and opportunity sites before introducing the preliminary concept plan and two alternatives. She then illustrated area-wide recommendations illustrated with a series of example photographs, explained the components of proposed land use categories, and presented amounts of development expected under the plan and one alternative. Comments included the following:

- Allowing up to 16 stories, rather than 12, in Very High Density Transit Oriented Residential areas would allow Swensen to build their product type. (Mark Hirth, Barry Swenson Builder).

SUBAREAS

After introducing the plan and alternatives, Ms. Gould described each subarea in detail, inviting comments from meeting attendees. These are summarized below.

Great Mall Retail

- There should be more emphasis on the connection between the Great Mall and Piper/Montague. If the spur and railroad turn around cannot be relocated, an alternative should be in place to allow the connection to happen in any case. (Jim Murar, RGC Courthomes)
- It might be possible to connect an elevated pedestrian walkway from a parking structure in the Great Mall to Piper/Montague – this would be very effective. (Mark Hirth)
- The location and potential Mills participation for such a project would have to be discussed with Brad Kempf. (Leslie Gould)

Great Mall/Montague

- How much flexibility would there be in the long run to reduce the size of the Retail Mixed Use land use in the north of this subarea? Would residential uses be permitted here? (Myron Crawford, Berg & Berg)
- There are many options available to the Arcadia property, and the preliminary concept looks fine from their perspective. (Rob Wooten, Arcadia Properties)
- Montague is a difficult street to drive, with its bus lanes and heavy traffic. This should be considered when locating retail, especially super markets – access to such uses should be facilitated. (Myron Crawford)

Montague/Trade Zone

- The stakeholders present had no comments.

BART Station Area

- The elevated BART track is a sudden development that does not seem to be in the best interests of the City. For a savings of only \$20 million on a several billion dollar project, it is not worth the impacts on the surrounding environment. (Stanley Herzstein, Herzstein Properties)
- To give BART's perspective, this is only one of many incremental savings ideas throughout the proposed line that will result in a larger amount. Also, such projects do exist near residential areas, as in North Berkeley. (Leslie Gould)
- The residential areas BART traverses in Berkeley and El Cerrito are not high density, so it does not affect that many units. (Stanley Herzstein)
- Why is an elevated track cheaper than a trench? (Jim Murar)
- It is always cheaper to build elevated structures than excavating. Dennis Carrington told BART that an elevated track was not beneficial to the city, however. (Mike McNealy)
- Residential densities around the proposed elevated track will only increase, and so there is a significant impact on these units. (Stanley Herzstein)
- The City has some leverage, as BART depends upon having high density housing as much as the housing depends on a liveable BART environment. (Mark Hirth)
- The strength of the City Council's political voice will be an important determinant in negotiations with BART, and they will need the help of interested property owners to lobby their case. (Leslie Gould)
- Locating the BART parking structure to the east of the station is beneficial because it screens noise and activity, but it is very important that it be a nice looking building. (Mark Hirth)
- The BART parking structure in Walnut Creek is a nice brick structure with flower planters at each level. (Nanci Vega)
- Having BART in itself is a large advantage for Milpitas. (Mike McNealy)
- In order to negotiate with BART, it will be important to understand their issues and their point of view. (Leslie Gould)
- There was a question about the Capitol Avenue urban interchange.
- The urban interchange is very helpful in terms of traffic; what are the disadvantages? (Mike McNealy)

- Adjacent properties will be looking at a large, freeway-like structure. This could lower rents or property values. (Leslie Gould)
- Funding for the interchange probably won't materialize any time soon – not an immediate concern. (Rob Wooten)
- Affordable units can be placed facing the interchange. (Mark Hirth)
- The costs of going underground should be studied before this project goes forward; don't give up on that idea yet. (Rob Wooten)
- The project will probably not be built for 15 to 20 years, so it should not be an immediate concern. (Mike McNealy)

Piper/Montague

- There are potential cost savings for BART if the spur is moved, as BART lines will not have to descend or become elevated as soon if there is no spur in place, and less right-of-way (to share with Union Pacific) will need to be purchased. In addition, if BART is in a trench, a bridge will need to be built for the spur to cross over BART lines. (Mike McNealy)
- It appears that the plan for this area is very dependent on the spur, and how it is resolved. (Steve Schott, Citation Homes)
- The alternatives show a street going along the spur right-of-way; if spur cannot be removed, development can still be built facing away from it, instead of onto what would have been the street. (Leslie Gould)
- The spur is not very active and the trains that run on it are very slow. If it stayed it would not be a big problem in this regard. Materials transported are chemical, however. (Russ Winslow, Six Sigma)
- Residents called in from Parc Metropolitan due to train noise. (Mike McNealy)
- Parc Metropolitan is a lot more active. There are rumors that spur user may move to Tracy. (Jim Murar)
- These are only at the rumor stage at present. (Mike McNealy)
- Do not bring too much external traffic into Piper/Montague – having one through street in this neighborhood to Montague is enough. (Mark Hirth)
- The critical concern is to maintain block sizes and walkability, so having one north/south auto connection, as shown in alternatives, is acceptable. (Leslie Gould)
- How is a “small amount” of retail defined? (Mark Hirth)
- The plan would need to be evaluated in more detail by ERA, and number of units more closely approximated to define exactly, but it really means small, local-serving enterprises such as a dry cleaner or coffee shop. (Leslie Gould)

DEVELOPMENT TYPES

Ms. Gould showed a variety of examples of development types recommended for the area. Stakeholders had a series of questions and concerns, as outlined below.

- The product type shown in the Parc Metropolitan photo has a density of 26 du/acre, although the development as a whole is 18 du/acre. (Jim Murar)

- What is the affordable housing requirement? (Myron Crawford)
- Twenty percent in redevelopment areas. The redevelopment agency has been assisting each project to achieve this goal. (Tambri Heyden)
- Will the City help projects outside the redevelopment area achieve their requirements? (Jim Murar)
- It may be possible. (Tambri Heyden)
- How large are the housing units shown in Preservation Park in Oakland? (Mark Hirth)
- They are regular one to two bedroom units, not studios or lofts. (Leslie Gould)
- Many of the example photos don't show landscaping in front of developments –will this apply to the alternatives? (Jim Murar)
- Landscaping is not required on all streets. Details will be developed according to housing types. In addition, the landscaped area does not usually have to be very large, just provide some separation. (Leslie Gould)
- Could the first floor be parking if it is “dressed up”? (Mark Hirth)
- Screening or landscaping a floor of parking won't meet standards. Acceptable options include wrapping parking with units, building it half-up/half-down so that it creates a half-basement and units are raised slightly above sidewalk level, or providing alley access to parking behind the main street. The goal is to have building entrances and windows facing the street, and “eyes on the street”. (Leslie Gould)
- It is important to specify net or gross densities, and parking ratios. (Jim Murar)
- The trend is for high density developments to be rental housing, due to high insurance costs on ownership units on a per unit basis. This is especially hard for smaller builders. (Steve Schott)
- Please show parking requirements when showing examples of different densities. Some of the models shown do not work with Milpitas parking requirements. (Jim Murar)
- We will check parking requirements in other cities. (Leslie Gould)
- We build housing in towers, with parking in a separate structure. Would it be possible to wrap our parking structure with retail, on Montague, across from the BART parking structure? (Mark Hirth)
- The land use definitions will allow “exceptions with a use permit”, to make this possible. There are cases, such as on the expressway, where it could be permitted through the permit process. (Leslie Gould)
- The drainage project is scheduled for 2008 to 2010. (Mike McNealy)
- With there be detention requirements? (Myron Crawford)
- Not per se, however new Water Quality Control Board standards require that no water leave a site without treatment, so some detention may be necessary. This is just for water treatment, not for flood control purposes. One advantage of BART is that if they build in a trench, they will have to solve water problems for the area. There are both north/south and east/west flows in the area. (Mike McNealy, Leslie Gould)

STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD

Ms. Gould directed the discussion to development issues that need to be resolved, key steps necessary to go forward, the phasing of implementation, and infrastructure improvements and financing. Comments are summarized below.

- If Montague is widened in the near future, the street section should include landscaping according to the concept plan. (Russ Winslow)
- Streetscape improvements are envisioned more for new development than for existing. The setback dimension is not yet defined and should be discussed with the City Council. However, it will be at least 25-30 feet. (Leslie Gould)
- This should be further discussed, and a temporary landscape perhaps installed until older properties redevelop. (Mike McNealy)
- An additional sales tax will be put to vote in 2006 to cover the operating costs of BART. It will not be popular, but must go through to cover operational costs. (David Miller, VTA)
- The spur question will probably be resolved within the next 1-1/2 years or so. (Leslie Gould)
- The concept plan will be presented to the City Council in March. The Council will then decide if they will pay for a specific plan for the area, or request some help from the property owners. It will be a \$1/2 million project, including the EIR. (Tambri Heyden)
- What density does Steve Schott recommend in for-sale housing? (Myron Crawford)
- Our cut off is about 45 du/ac on a net basis. Others working in more urban settings, such as Signature Properties, have lower parking and open space requirements and can go higher. It will be necessary to define whether densities are gross or net. (Steve Schott)
- Piper/Montague should have special consideration since it will contain many public streets. Other developers have not provided the same. (Jim Murar)
- One problem with parking lots wrapped with housing is that larger block sizes are needed. (Leslie Gould)

CONCERNS AND DEAL BREAKERS

After outlining the next steps in the process, Ms. Gould requested that participants state any issues or concerns they have, and explain any "deal breakers", so that necessary negotiations can take place before finalizing the concept plan and presenting it to the City Council. The following statements were made:

- Concerns include defining how densities are calculated (gross or net), parking ratios, improving connectivity across Montague, the railroad spur, and the wye. (Jim Murar)
- Will the plan be easy to change once it is in effect? (Myron Crawford)
- Adjustments always take place over time, but in general, the overall plan vision should be clearly established, and the major elements should remain in place unless circumstances change substantially. (Leslie Gould)
- What about providing schools? This may be a concern at the Council meeting. (Steve Schott)
- The next steps in the process will provide more detail, such as schools. (Leslie Gould)
- The school superintendent is looking at the concept plan area. Schools need to evaluate their capacity at present. (Jim Murar)

MEETING ATTENDEES

The following property owners, representatives, and stakeholders were present at the Design Charrette.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Company/Affiliation</i>
Stanley Herzstein	Herzstein Properties, LLC
Pete Dudley	Dudley Ridge Properties
Nancy Dixon	Pro-Star Auto & Tow
Fred Eder	BT Commercial
Bob Lanlor	RWL Investments
Dennis Carrington	City of Milpitas
Mark Hirth	Barry Swenson
Aaron Yakligian	Trumark Companies
Jim Schmidt	Cornish & Carey Comm.
Nanci Vega	UBS Realty Investors
Russ Winslow	Six Sigma
Myron Crawford	Berg & Berg
David Miller	MTA
Steve Schott	Citation Homes
James Lindsay	City of Milpitas
Rob Wooten	Arcadia Properties
Darryl Way	City of Milpitas
Tambri Heyden	City of Milpitas
Mike McNeely	City of Milpitas
Joe Oliva	City of Milpitas
Jamie Rodriguez	City of Milpitas
Bill Weisgerber	City of Milpitas
Keyvan Irranejad	City of Milpitas